

We Need A National Citizens' Assembly!

A **National Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform** is a way to overcome the self-interest of politicians and **give everyday people the power to propose a system for Canada.**

How does a Citizens' Assembly (CA) work?

- **Participants are chosen randomly** or by civic lottery to ensure the assembly is representative of the population.
- The public is divided into subpopulations to ensure **a fair selection** of gender, age, ethnicity, geography, education, language and more.
- Participants develop an in-depth understanding of the issue by **listening to experts** who share their knowledge with the assembly.
- Citizens would aim to reach a consensus to ensure the assembly is **a process Canadians can trust.**
- **The proposal is presented to parliament** which can then decide to vote on it.

Policy outcomes of CAs are rooted in evidence, rather than party politics or election cycles.

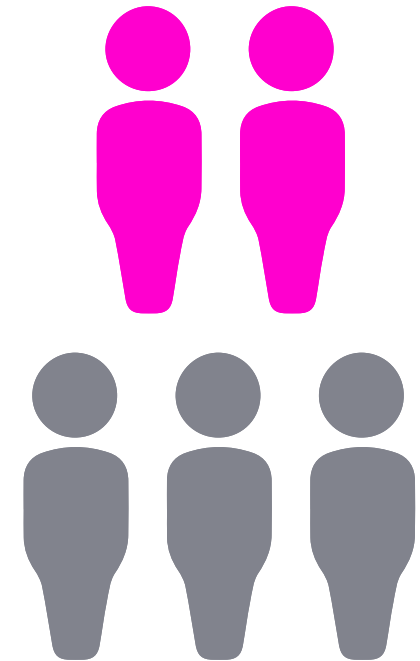
CAs are increasingly being used to find consensus on tough issues when **politicians are in a conflict of interest,** notably in Ireland, France, and the UK.

Scan This To Get Involved!



www.fairvote.ca

www.nationalcitizensassembly.ca



**TWO OUT OF FIVE
IS NOT A MAJORITY**

**End First Past the Post
Demand Proportional Representation!**

What's Wrong With First Past the Post?

First Past the Post (FPTP) is Canada's current single-member, "winner-controls-all" electoral system where the candidate with the most votes wins.

False majorities, where the governing party receives a majority of seats with a minority of the vote, are a common side-effect of our system.

FPTP also **causes instability** as minority governments elected under this system tend not to last long due to the ruling party dissolving parliament early in its search for **absolute power**.

FPTP also causes us to **frequently flip-flop** between ideologically opposed governments leading to costly **policy reversals** (the cancellation of policies put in place by the previous government).

Canada is one of the few industrialized countries still using FPTP in modern times.

Other side-effects of FPTP include:

- Wasted votes
- Strategic voting
- Vote splitting
- Voter apathy
- Inequality of voting power
- Divisive politics / campaigning
- Decreased diversity of representatives

What is Proportional Representation?

Proportional Representation (PR) is a family of voting systems where the number of seats a party has in parliament approximately matches the percentage of people who voted for that party (30% of the vote = 30% of the seats).

PR is achieved by electing **several representatives** for a given geographic region, instead of just one.

This eliminates false majorities and encourages **cooperation between parties**, leading to long-lasting policies.

Local representation is a key part of any PR system recommended for Canada including Mixed-Member Proportional (**MMP**), the Single Transferable Vote (**STV**), and Rural-Urban Proportional (**RUPR**).

More than 90 countries use some form of PR to elect their national legislature, resulting in stable **multi-party coalition governments**.

Other benefits of PR include:

- Easy-to-use ballots
- Increased accountability
- Equality of voting power
- Can increase voter turnout
- Elimination of strategic voting
- Equal representation for all voters
- Increased diversity in the legislature
- A "political champion" for every Canadian

What About Ranked Ballots?

In Canada, a "ranked ballot" almost always refers to **the Alternative Vote (AV)**, a particular winner-controls-all voting system where voters rank the candidates in the order of their preference (**1st, 2nd, 3rd**).

This process **institutionalizes strategic voting** by funneling votes from a person's first choice to their second and so forth until a single candidate is elected.

AV is used in Australia's lower house where it consistently **creates false majorities**.

While people are free to cast their first preference vote for a smaller party, results in Australia show that **AV shuts small parties out of parliament** just as much as First Past the Post.

AV also tends to **benefit larger, more established centrist parties**.

For example, analysis shows that if a ranked ballot had been used in the 2015 election, **the Liberals would have won an even larger majority** (224 seats instead of 184 under FPTP).

The best use for ranked ballots is as a tool in proportional systems to help elect multiple representatives per riding.

Ranked ballots are also useful in municipalities that elect their **councillors in at-large seats** or wards with more than one councillor.